

SONG · OF  
THE · PALM

TRACY · ROBINSON

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# SONG OF THE PALM

AND OTHER POEMS,

MOSTLY TROPICAL.

TO WHICH IS ADDED

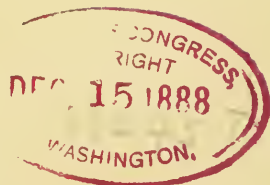
AN ORATION, DELIVERED AT THE UNITED STATES  
CONSULATE, ASPINWALL, ON THE  
FOURTH OF JULY,  
1866.

33

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BY  
TRACY ROBINSON.

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BRENTANOS:

NEW YORK. WASHINGTON. CHICAGO. PARIS.  
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My feet love well to haunt the meads,  
And wander where the thrush is loud ;  
And yet some sad enchantment leads  
Me aye among the busy crowd ;  
And with bent head my life proceeds  
Where the smoke hovers like a cloud.

*From "Shadow-Soul," by John Payne.*

---

Sumptuous is the South—a Syren singing us ever forward to a bliss never reached ; but with each mile won, she makes the pursuit more passionate, brimming the cup that only feeds the thirst with delicious draughts that taste divine.

*From "Nile Notes," by George William Curtis.*

*Sometimes I pause before an open gate,  
The Gate of Dreams;  
And wonder if, by any happy fate,  
The lucent gleams  
Of all the glad and golden world within,  
My gaze that meet,  
Are presages that I may some day win  
That fair retreat.*

## SONG OF THE PALM.

---

"The trees are imperfect men, and seem to bemoan their imprisonment, rooted in the ground."—EMERSON.

### I.

Wild is its nature, as it were a token,  
Born of the sunshine, and the stars, and sea ;  
Grand as a passion, felt, but never spoken,  
Lonely and proud and free.

For when the Maker set its crown of beauty,  
And for its home ordained the torrid ring,  
Assigning unto each its place and duty,  
He made the Palm a King.

So when in reverie I look and listen,  
Half dream-like floats within my passive mind,  
Why in the sun its branches gleam and glisten,  
And harp-wise beat the wind ;

SONG OF THE PALM.

Why, when the sea-waves, heralding their tidings,  
Come roaring on the shore with crests of down,  
In grave acceptance of their sad confidings,  
It bows its stately crown ;

Why, in the death-like calms of night and morn-  
ing,  
Its quivering spears of green are never still,  
But ever tremble, as, at solemn warning,  
A human heart may thrill ;

And also why it stands in lonely places,  
By the red desert or the sad sea shore,  
Or haunts the jungle, or the mountain graces  
Where eagles proudly soar !

It is a sense of kingly isolation,  
Of royal beauty and enchanting grace,  
Proclaiming from the earliest creation  
The power and pride of race,

SONG OF THE PALM.

That has almost imbued it with a spirit,  
And made it sentient, although still a tree,  
With dim perception that it might inherit  
An immortality.

The lines of kinship thus so near converging,  
It is not strange, O heart of mine, that I,  
While stars were shining and old ocean surging,  
Should intercept a sigh.

It fell a-sighing when the faint wind, dying,  
Had kissed the tropic night a fond adieu—  
The starry cross on her warm bosom lying,  
Within the southern view.

And when the crescent moon, the west descend-  
ing,  
Drew o'er her face the curtain of the sea,  
In the rapt silence, eager senses lending,  
Low came the sigh to me.

SONG OF THE PALM.

God of my life ! how can I ever render  
The full sweet meaning sadly thus conveyed ;  
The full sad meaning, heart-breakingly tender,  
That through the cadence strayed ?

O that the Priestess, who, with magic lyre,  
Sang last the South, ere death gave her to fame,  
Had heard, and fanned her fierce poetic fire  
Into " baptismal flame " !

That he who by the far Egyptian river,  
Howadji worshipful from Western shores,  
Caught the grand inspiration that forever  
The sunlight round it pours,

Again had listened, and again revealing  
The intertropic summer of the soul,  
Had made translation, eloquent with feeling  
Beyond my poor control !



SONG OF THE PALM.

II.

When the wild North-wind by the sun enchanted,  
Seeks the fair South, as lover beauty's shrine,  
It bears the moaning of the sorrow-haunted,  
Gloomy, storm-beaten Pine.

The waves of ocean catch the miserere,  
Far wafted seaward from the wintry main,  
They roll it on o'er reaches vast and dreary  
With infinite refrain,

Until on coral shores, where endless Summer  
Waves golden banners round her queenly  
throne,  
The Palm enfolds the weary spirit roamer  
With low responsive moan.

SONG OF THE PALM.

The sea-grape hears it, and the lush banana,  
In the sweet indolence of their repose ;  
The frangipanni, like a crowned Sultana,  
The passion-flower, and rose ;

And the fierce tiger in his darksome lair,  
Deep hid away beneath the bamboo-tree ;  
All the wild habitants of earth and air,  
And of the sleeping sea.

It throws a spell of silence so enthralling,  
So breathless and intense and mystical,  
Not the deep hush of skies when stars are falling  
Can fill the soul so full.

A death in life ! A calm so deep and brooding  
It floods the heart with an ecstatic pain ;  
Brimming with joy, yet fearfully foreboding  
The dreadful hurricane.

SONG OF THE PALM.

Fail love, fly happiness, yield all things mortal !

Fate, with the living, hath my small lot cast  
To dwell beside thee, Palm ! Beyond death's  
portal,

Guard well my sleep at last.

For I do love thee with a lover's passion.

Morn, noon, and night thou art forever grand—  
Type of a glory God alone may fashion  
Within the Summer Land.

Sigh not, O Palm ! Dread not the final hour.

For oft I've seen within thy gracious shade,  
Amid rose-garlands fair from Love's own bower,  
Lithe, dusky forms displayed,

Clad with the magic of their beauty only ;

And it were strange if Paradise should be  
Despoiled and made forever sad and lonely,  
Bereft of these and thee !

*AMONG THE DREDGES.*

---

TO H. B. S.

Down where the baby Andes  
Lie a-dream under tropic skies,  
And the turbulent river Chagres  
Rushes forward torrent-wise  
Through the equatorial jungle,  
On its way to the parent sea,  
I have seen those marvellous dredges,  
Like huge engines of destiny.

It is wonderful to watch them,  
As they swing at their work all day,  
Like antediluvian monsters,  
Devouring the earth in their way.  
Nor yet do they pause for the darkness,  
But as well through the hours of night,  
They never tire nor falter  
Till the dawn of the morning light.

AMONG THE DREDGES.

They are toiling for civilization !

And the world will one day know  
How great is the debt it owes them,

When the tides of the oceans flow  
Back and forth, from each to the other !

And then, as with one acclaim,  
My friend, you will stand acknowledged,  
And will wear the laurel of fame !

*IN ABSENCE.*

---

Though spices lure me and the rose-tree throws  
Her heart of fragrance to beguile the sense,  
Though warm airs woo me and the beauty grows  
Intense,

Though sunsets ravish with their blue and gold,  
And amber moons enchant the tropic zone,  
Love grows a-weary and my heart a-cold,  
Alone !

Then come, my darling, come again to me,  
Nor linger longer on the far-off shore ;  
Between us there shall roll the cruel sea  
No more.

I long to clasp you in a fond embrace,  
And tell you, tell you, with my every breath,  
I ne'er again will miss your loving face  
Till death !

*PLANTING OF THE PALM.*

---

The sea was breaking on its reef of coral  
    With its unceasing roar,  
While darker than the hue of pine or laurel  
    Beyond it lay the shore—  
The tropic shore. And there, one happy hour,  
    In the brief sunset calm,  
Just in the shadow of a fragrant bower,  
    We planted our first palm,  
My love and I. And as we sat beside it  
    We said it might so be,  
The time might come, unless we were denied it,  
    When we would have our tree.  
We told it then a loving little story,  
    As if it might take heed ;  
Then turned away to read the sunset glory  
    That was in part our creed.

PLANTING OF THE PALM.

Alas, the years have flown ; each has departed  
More swiftly than the last,  
And now alone all sad and heavy-hearted  
I'm dreaming of the past.

Its branches wave ; but she, my love so tender,  
For whom all things make moan,  
No longer bides with me. O, could I send her  
Translation of the tone

In which our palm tree is forever sighing,  
Perhaps it would allay  
The grief of which her heart is almost dying,  
To be so far away.

*Harper's Magazine, 1874.*



*A TROPIC SUNSET.*

---

Vanished the vision ! Shadows of darkness  
Compass the heavens, swift as disaster  
Follows the onset of a grand army  
Valiant of heroes.

Who shall describe it ? There, o'er the ocean,  
Just where the headland creeps from the mountain,  
Thirsty with summer, down to the water,  
Daylight departed.

From the black tempest there at the northward,  
Where the horizon blends with the desert  
Of the eternal wild surging billows,  
Flashed the red lightning.

A TROPIC SUNSET.

East, where the shadows o'er fair Santa Rita  
Gather and hover, ghostly white vapors,  
Creeping all softly up from the valleys,  
Lay down to slumber.

All o'er the heavens spread a wide glory,  
Greater than Jacob saw in his vision,  
Grander by far than ever imagined  
Milton or Dante.

The shore seemed enchanted, the sea turned to  
amber,  
With pontoons of crystal thrown from cloud-  
castles,  
Proudly erected there on the mountains  
Of the true Gold Coast.

Vessels seemed sailing up from the sunset,  
Laden with treasure ; sailing all fairly,  
While o'er their courses waved without number  
Banners of crimson.

A TROPIC SUNSET.

Islands of beauty, seemingly real,  
Filled all the west with a peace so enchanting,  
The heart, being human, longed without measure  
    Its joys to inherit ;

Eagerly longed that the shades of life's evening,  
Folding their wings over all that can perish,  
Might gather the loved on a shore so celestial  
    In the Hereafter.

God knows forever the thoughts of His creatures;  
Knows their true value. Therefore before Him  
It were but vain that a pretence were offered  
    For true devotion.

Will He then listen, will He believe us,  
When we, all thankful, reading His Gospel,  
Lay on His altar all that He gave us ?  
    Love is immortal.

*MY PRAYER.*

---

O Love,  
Sing me thy song—  
Blind singer sweet upon my threshold here.  
Stay, and thy carol lovingly prolong,  
Nor ever fear ;  
And while thou singest, in a waking dream  
Of happy fantasies will I explore  
The sunny plenitude of wood and stream,  
Of cloud and mountain and the murmuring  
shore,  
To bring for thee what cheer,  
O Love !

MY PRAYER.

O Life,  
Thy meaning teach.  
Unfold for me thy hidden, fateful lore,  
That howso toiling thy grand heights to reach,  
Not any more  
My weary travail shall be all in vain ;  
That sun or tempest shall alike reveal  
Forever lessening loss and greater gain.  
Keep, keep my heart as true as finest steel  
To reap thy richest store,  
O Life !

MY PRAYER.

O Death,  
In sombre state,  
The torch invert not until latest day ;  
Nor heap the dull red mound. I pray thee wait,  
With kind delay,  
Till the long loving summer-time is gone,  
And happy autumn hoards her sun-wrought  
gold ;  
Till the wild frost-winds, frowning down the  
dawn,  
Chill noon and sunset with their bitter cold,  
And bid no longer stay,  
O Death !

MY PRAYER.

O Faith,  
Lo, here am I !  
Bear me aloft upon triumphant wings !  
Although deep laden with the sad alloy  
Of sinful things,  
Close in the folds of thy protecting care,  
Nor doubt nor darkness shall assail me more ;  
But sunlit visions, rapturously fair,  
Shall gild my longings for the glorious shore  
Whence flow thy crystal springs,  
O Faith !

*JUNE MEMORIES FROM THE  
TROPICS.*

---

Within the cool dark shade of tropic trees,  
    Broad-leaved banana, lime, and stately palm,  
I muse of June in lands beyond the seas,  
    Far from this realm of calm.  
The droning of cicadas fills the air,  
    And captive kites complain with drowsy tone ;  
The day is golden, and the green earth fair,  
    All through the Summer zone.  
  
A thousand blended sweets diffuse their charm  
    From myriads of flowers on every hand,  
And sensuous pleasure seems no sinful harm  
    Within this "Lotus-land."  
Strange that, surrounded by a world so bright,  
    Thought should play truant and escape control;  
Strange that the fiend unrest should try his might  
    To captivate the soul.



JUNE MEMORIES FROM THE TROPICS.

But when across the equatorial line

The sun advances northward day by day,  
Remembrance comes to take this heart of mine  
And carry it away.

For then I know that on the hills of home,

Still bare and sad from winter's snowy reign,  
A magic transformation soon will come  
And beauty rule again.

Then from the glowing sameness of this land,

Although Lethean in its subtle charm,  
I long to go and once more haply stand  
Upon my father's farm.

Once more, on some sweet morning of the spring,

When all around is hushed and very still,  
I long to hear the robin-redbreast sing  
And listen to the mill ;

JUNE MEMORIES FROM THE TROPICS.

The rustic saw-mill, just behind the wood,  
Where there was skating in the winter days,  
And where in spring a lovely lily-brood  
And willows met the gaze.  
A little down the stream a meadow spread,  
Until it came close to the school-house door ;  
While near, the lonely grave-yard hid its dead,  
In the sad, glad days of yore.

Clear as the scenery of a waking dream,  
Half filled with pleasure, half with tearful pain,  
Those days and years of my lost boyhood seem,  
When called to view again.  
My fondest recollection treasures yet  
The revelation of each wondrous day,  
When buttercup and purple violet  
Vied to embellish May.

JUNE MEMORIES FROM THE TROPICS.

Then like the soothing murmur of the sea,  
Or magic measure of some grand old tune,  
Come sweetest floral memories to me  
From green and lovely June.  
And though the miracle of life each day  
In chains of tropic splendor bind me here,  
I sigh, alas ! that I am far away  
From scenes that are so dear.

*Colon, 1880.*

COME SOON!

---

Hastens my dear one to her tropic nest?  
Shares her fond heart the burden of unrest,  
With which mine own is evermore opprest,  
    When she is gone?  
Will her dear feet soon press this Summer shore,  
And will the touches of her hand once more,  
Her smile and voice, console me as of yore,  
    In love's fair dawn?

I *know* she comes! Unless, unless the snows  
Have spread o'er her their mantle of repose!  
Ah, heart of mine, forecast the bitter woes  
    So surely thine  
If this should be! But no. I will not grant  
A fear so direful should my spirit haunt.  
Hope shall befriend me and shall sweetly chant  
    Her lay divine.

COME SOON !

So sure it seems that this great happiness  
Will soon be mine—my darling to caress,  
Gaze in her eyes, and to my bosom press

Her form so fair—

That I have told the secret to the flowers ;  
And now, in unison, we count the hours,  
Ere with red roses from their fragrant bowers

I'll deck her hair.

It is no longer gone than yesterday,  
A graceful bamboo bent its head o'er me,  
Reclining by my glorious blue sea—

Blue sky above—

And nodding “yes” to all my questionings,  
Gave the sweet promise that with snowy wings  
Spread to the gales, e'en now the swift ship brings

My dearest love.

COME SOON !

My heart is full of her ! When I awake,  
The doves are cooing for her dear love's sake ;  
The palms are waving and the foam-crests break  
    Along the shore.

The warm winds whisper lovingly of her,  
When in the dreamy air they are astir ;  
O, she shall be my only comforter  
    For evermore !

*THE MAJORITY.*

---

How fare they all, they of the pallid faces,  
Beyond our power to beckon their return?  
How is it with them in the shadow places?  
How shall we learn  
Their solemn secret? How can we discover,  
By any earnest seeking, the true way  
Unto the knowing in what realm they hover,  
In what high day,  
Or in what sombre shadows of the night,  
They are forever hidden from our sight?

THE MAJORITY.

We question vainly. Yet it somehow pleases,  
When they have spoken the last sad good-bye,  
It somehow half the pain of parting eases,  
That in the sky,  
In the vast solitudes of stars and spaces,  
There may be consciousness and life and hope,  
And that when we must yield to death's embraces,  
There may be scope  
For the unfolding of the better powers,  
So sadly stifled in this life of ours.



*MY FRIEND.*

---

It may be a dream that our gruesome fate  
    Will ever bestow,  
The faultless comrade, with heart so great  
    In weal or woe,  
That faith shall abide and an equal trust  
    Bind two in one,  
Till day is night and dust is dust  
    And life is done.

But I will seek and will hope to find,  
    Until the end,  
When with mists of death my eyes grow blind,  
    This friend, MY friend !  
And when found, lest that hooks of steel should  
    part  
    And yield control,  
We will fetter each other heart to heart,  
    In bonds of soul.

*EQUATORIAL.*

---

My soul awakes when the jaguar wakes,  
As the sun withdraws his ray;  
Throws off the day and awakes and shakes,  
With a jaguar-hunger for prey ;

Awakes from the dull routine, and slakes  
Its so fiercely burning thirst,  
In the west, where the crimson sunset lakes  
Bathe the isles of gold immersed.

In the sunset first its fierce hunger and thirst  
Does my craving soul allay,  
Where mid gleams of glory, burst on burst,  
Night folds away the day;

EQUATORIAL.

Then far afloat on the sea remote,  
Where fringes of rain-clouds trail,  
Or near the shore where a silent boat  
Sails past with a palm-branch sail ;

Down where the deck of the cyclone wreck  
Is rotting upon the reef,  
The red waves rise like a serpent's neck,  
And recoil like a guilty thief.

And east, in the East ! Did ever wild beast,  
In the rage of a caged unrest,  
Turn east and west, and west and east,  
As I turn east and west ?

For a full moon rides the azure tides,  
And pours down the airy way  
Floods gossamer soft as the veil that hides  
A queen on her bridal day !

EQUATORIAL.

Elate, elate ! When the hunter, Fate,  
Speeds his swift and deadly dart—  
Sate, with the blood of sunsets sate,  
And of beauty's beating heart—

Perhaps in a clime that is more sublime  
My semblance again may roam,  
To prey on the shores where Father Time  
Shall have found an eternal home !

*Colon, 1887.*

*THE BANANA PLANTER.*

---

At a bend of Rio Chagres, near the lonely  
Carib sea,

Stands the palm-thatched hut of Sanchez, and a  
planter bold is he.

Descended from a Spaniard who came in early  
days,

With the horde of treasure-seekers, that with  
endless prayer and praise

Preyed truly on the natives they found along  
their track,

His complexion, I must tell you, for a certainty  
is black.

It is possibly the climate ; for the sun has horrid  
ways

Of tanning skins of people with his horrid torrid  
rays ;

THE BANANA PLANTER.

The fairest grow off-colored, and in time there  
may be doubt

Whether blood of pure hidalgo may not come  
to peter out.

But in the case of Sanchez—Don Carlos he is  
styled—

When facts are squarely stated, he was his  
mother's child ;

And she, without a question, save some that  
muddle things,

Was the royal far-off daughter of a line of  
Congo kings.

And now, beside the river, with fair vistas up  
and down,

Where the hills are gay in sunshine and dark  
when storm-clouds frown,

Their robes of verdure blending with the bloom  
of countless flowers,

THE BANANA PLANTER.

Inwrought by Mother Nature as she weaves the  
Web of Hours,

Where the peacefulness of summer broods low  
in lovely skies,

And life, a dream of beauty, cheats unac-  
customed eyes,

This banana planter liveth ; nor dwelleth he  
alone ;

For the mother of his children, with lineage like  
his own—

Castilian in the background with Timbuctoo at  
the fore—

Has borne as many children as ever mother bore,  
And yet survived.

At present, in that grove of tropic trees,  
Whose fruit-crop is exported to New York  
across the seas,

To be eaten there quite thoughtless of how or  
whence it came,

THE BANANA PLANTER.

Nor yet the slightest wonder how or whence it  
took its name,  
Or knowledge of the banner-broad, magnificent  
great leaves,  
Unfolded like as banners on the balm of tropic  
eves,  
To wave with lazy motion, or in the morning  
sun  
Resembling fair transparencies, goodly to gaze  
upon,  
Pale-green against the glory of the fervid east-  
ern sky—  
At present, I was saying, should the curious  
passer-by  
Desire to see Don Carlos and his endless  
progeny,  
To investigate the customs and the hospitality  
Of the native of the jungle, he need entertain no  
fear



THE BANANA PLANTER.

He will not be duly welcomed with the best of  
native cheer.

Do not hesitate to enter ; for though the curs be  
rude,  
And rush out helter-skelter, like a hungry  
wolfish brood,  
There is seldom any danger that the stranger  
will be hurt,  
Though such a snarly welcome might be thought  
a trifle curt.

The hut was planned for coolness ; and its archi-  
tect took pains  
To leave it open to the winds, so the roof kept  
out the rains ;  
And it has the double merit as a tropical abode,  
That while it is *al fresco* it is likewise *à la mode*.  
Full details might be tiresome ; but an outline  
let me give,

THE BANANA PLANTER.

Of the free and easy manner in which these  
people live—

These “dusky children of the sun,” to use a  
poet’s flight,

The “dusky” meaning, if you please, the color  
of the night.

As for raiment: In a climate where the sum-  
mer never fails,

It would be an utter nuisance to assume the  
swallow-tails,

The corsages and so forth which the fashionable  
fates

Impose upon poor devils there in Europe and  
the States.

And therefore Carlos Sanchez, like a sensible  
old Don,

Feels more at ease and happier with little cloth-  
ing on ;

THE BANANA PLANTER.

While Señora, as a model for the study of the  
nude

Would undoubtedly seem awful in the judgment  
of the prude.

While the children! Did you ever! No, you  
never, I declare!

But why pursue a subject that is so very bare?

Let us rather enter in, or enter under, shall I  
say,

Since the roof alone is all there is between us  
and the day.

Four sturdy posts are planted, and upon them  
there is placed

The tent-like superstructure; then the domicile  
is graced

With hammocks for siesta, and some skillets,  
pots and pans,

THE BANANA PLANTER.

And these are supplemented by a wealth of  
empty cans,  
Which do duty in the menage quite as bravely  
as the best  
Of Dresden or of Venice. And as for place of  
rest,  
A notched post in the centre of this novel  
tenement  
Leads the climber to an attic, where no doubt  
supreme content  
Attends the huddled sleepers, when the shadows  
of the night  
Fall around the home of Sanchez and the tropic  
stars are bright.

But see them in the evening ere the hour for  
sleep has come,  
Disporting to the music of a kind of native  
drum ;

THE BANANA PLANTER.

The tum-tum, the fandango! and in all the  
realms of earth,

I can positively promise no more jollity and  
mirth.

The neighbors all assemble, and each frisky girl  
and boy

Is ready for the frolic; each is eager to enjoy  
The intoxicating motion or the ravishing  
repose,

The only jewel visible a fire-fly or a rose!

Their social rules are simple, yet I do not  
hesitate

To venture the assertion that their virtues are  
as great,

Allowing for the latitude (which is said to in-  
terfere

Very sadly with the ethics of the conjugal  
career),

THE BANANA PLANTER.

As those of northern people who are liable to  
make  
A terrible commotion when propriety's at stake.

And so, upon the river, with fair vistas up and  
down,  
Removed from all the worriment of city and of  
town,  
Surrounded by a fairyland that knows no fall-  
ing leaf,  
Where the butterflies are radiant and the birds  
surpass belief,  
Where all things thrive and prosper and are  
glorious to see  
(Save the pallid apparitions of those whom  
destiny  
Has led captive from the Northland, and the  
fevers have assailed),

THE BANANA PLANTER.

I will leave our friend Don Carlos, with the  
hope I haven't failed  
To interest the reader of this imperfect lay,  
Whose humble servant I'll remain forever and  
a day !

*October, 1888.*

## EXTREMES.

---

The vultures floating in the upper air,  
On wide-expanded wings beneath the blue,  
Circle on wider circle within view,  
Higher and higher still, until the fair  
Far vision builds a splendid dream, with care  
And sordidness excluded, and a new  
High noble life made possible and true :  
This wins my spirit from its old despair.  
But when the vulture-nature once again  
Prevails above the instinct that aspires,  
And downward, at the call of low desires,  
Headlong with folded plumes they plunge, the  
pain,  
And all the grief of life come back amain :  
Ah, then hope mocks, and love and faith seem  
liars.

*Colon.*



*THE REVERENT MOOD.*

---

When thunders echo through the midnight sky,  
And lightnings flash with jagged forks of fire  
From black cloud-walls of storm, as if the ire,  
Long pent by fate, descended from on high,  
While, clustered in a mute expectancy,  
The palm trees tremble on the wild sea-shore,  
And Doom seems pending in the awful roar—  
My heart leaps outward with a reverent cry ;  
For in this tropic wonder-world of night  
And elemental passion, there abide  
Deep meanings of the Power that is the guide  
And arbiter of destiny, whose might  
Swayeth the boundless universe aright,  
And yet doth paint the lily in its pride.

*IN THE MORNING.*

---

What time the shadows of the night are fleeing  
Before the sunrise, and the darkness yields,  
A fine delight thrills all the bounds of being,  
As I stray lonely in the summer fields.

For Nature comes to me in smiling token  
Of loving kindness to again declare  
The olden promise she has never broken,  
That she has made of me a favored heir.

“I give to thee, in absolute fee-simple,  
To have,” she says, “and to forever hold,  
All these my riches ; from where valleys dimple  
The lovely prospect, to where hills are bold

IN THE MORNING.

Against the ether ! ” And I look and listen,  
As thus she speaks the message of the morn,  
What time my tear-drops with the dew-drops  
glisten,  
Standing enraptured near the growing corn !

All mine ! fair thanks to thee, most royal mother !  
Thy largess gives the ills of life surcease.  
To thee alone I owe, and to none other,  
This golden silence, this ideal peace !

*Wiesbaden, July, 1888.*

*IN THE EVENING.*

---

As when a dawn of doubtful promise ends  
In cold and cloudy certainty of storm,  
Thus oft the hopes of life's beginning form  
A sun-gleam only, that full early blends  
With tempest ; and before fair weather sends  
White truce, the surges of time's high-tide roar  
With anger round the noonday ; and the shore  
Of eveningtime with wreck and wrath portends.  
And yet, so changeful are the hope and fear  
Which rule the destinies of men and days,  
That when the sunset opens wide the fold  
Of peace and slumber, there will oft appear,  
Above the portals of night's gathering haze,  
Purple and rose and wealth of dreamland gold.

*Wiesbaden, July, 1888.*

*AT PANAMA.*

---

There is a palm beside my open door,  
Whose leaves the Southern Cross shines nightly  
through.

Within its dusky shadow evermore,  
On all fair eves, when lightly falls the dew,  
The South Sea keeps a love-tryst to renew  
Its amour with the low-reclining land,  
Lighting its soft approaches to my view  
With phosphorescent gleams on every hand,  
Like drowning stars, lost from heaven's radiant  
band.

Within this syren-soothing calm I come,  
Willing of mind to sink into repose.  
Lulled by the drowsy summer-insect hum  
(My cares left yonder at the lost day's close),  
I share existence with the night-blown rose,

AT PANAMA.

Whose soul of fragrance trembles in the air.  
Escaped from self and from all lesser foes,  
Star-crowned, sea-comforted, I once more dare  
To kiss the lips of love and twine her glorious hair.

*The Critic*, 1881.

*DOUBT.*

---

Vex me no more ; no longer fill my heart  
With strange unrest so near akin to pain.  
Fill up the doubting void, and bid depart  
The nameless shadow which no mortal art  
Can banish never to return again.

Break thy sad spell ; release the captive, Hope,  
So sadly pining for the morning light.  
Undo the bonds of Charity and ope  
Faith's slumbering vision to the wider scope  
Of an immortal day beyond the night.

O, cease thy power ; let human love rejoice  
That the sweet kisses of its early bloom  
Shall be perennial ; that smile and voice,  
That form and features of the heart's fond choice,  
Shall live again beyond the cruel tomb.

DOUBT.

I will not yield ! The foaming tide may rave,  
And threaten direful wreck of all my love ;  
The eager tempest still shall find me brave,  
With full reliance on the God who gave,  
That He will land us on his shores above.

*Harper's Magazine*, 1873.



*MARIE.*

---

Let me breathe in a whisper soft and low,  
To be heard alone by thee,  
One word of the love, of the passionate glow,  
Of my heart for my own Marie.

Since the hour we met, when the starlit night  
Seemed a mantle of jewels to be,  
No thought of joy, no dream of delight,  
Has been mine save of thee, Marie.

Far, far from thy side the rude fates of life  
May drift me, with stern decree,  
But midst all the storm and toil of its strife,  
I shall never cease loving Marie.

## *MY BOYHOOD HOME.*

---

### A REMINISCENCE.

#### I.

The years go sweeping onward in their course,  
Summers and winters tell their constant  
round,  
Brave youth and hardy manhood lose their  
force,  
Life in the fetters of old age lies bound.  
The story soon is told of each and all  
Who've lived, and loved, and suffered 'neath  
heaven's dome!  
Then would I briefly from the past recall  
Dear father, mother, friends and early home.

MY BOYHOOD HOME.

Scant welcome was there, when afar he came  
    Into the wild—that sturdy, earnest man—  
His worldly fortune nothing but good name  
    And that brave-hearted courage which outran  
All timid fears and bade him undertake,  
    There, in the endless forest's leafy gloom,  
His way in life to resolutely make,  
    Though toil and peril should pronounce his  
    doom.

Scant welcome ! For as yet the Indian trod  
    Those virgin wilds. The wolf, the bear, and  
    deer  
Scented his footsteps on the mossy sod,  
    Ere yet his rifle they had learned to fear.  
Wife of his bosom and the younglings small  
    Nestled all closely in the silence there,  
Nor vainly faltered their low trembling call  
    For Heaven's protection and the angels' care.

MY BOYHOOD HOME.

Unaided and alone wild nature to undo,  
From earliest dawn till darkness filled the air,  
His manly blows fell ceaselessly and true,  
Till the prone forest lighted the red glare  
Of the wild night-fires, whose consuming flame  
Swept the felled monarchs airward one by  
one,  
Until the blossoming of few summers came  
Ere fruitful acres smiled out in the sun.

Ever unwearied by rough daily toil,  
This hero of the wildwood still could find,  
By evening's fire-glow or the sacred oil  
Of midnight lamps some solace for the mind.  
With wondrous energies of hand and brain  
He wrought unceasingly ; and amid all,  
Through storm and sunshine, pleasure sweet or  
pain,  
Faith in God's mercy e'er sustained his soul !

MY BOYHOOD HOME.

Oh ! that my loving memory of him  
Might cast the fetters from this unskilled  
hand  
And teach my heart more faithfully to limn  
The noble portraiture. Could I command  
Fair Inspiration's lyre, then would I sing  
The meed of honor due, with grateful pride  
And depths of feeling, like the floods of spring  
Sweeping the vales with inundation wide.

Since lesser gifts are mine, and they untried,  
A simple record let me then essay,  
With kind affection for my gentle guide  
While in the fields of memory I stray.  
And let me pass those toilsome early years—  
The brave endeavors that their pages fill—  
To linger in the sunlight that endears  
For aye and aye the old Home on the Hill !

MY BOYHOOD HOME.

Time softens all it touches here below,  
And sheds a mild effulgence o'er the past,  
Bridging the gulfs of weariness and woe  
With bow as bright as that which is o'er cast  
The fabled distances 'twixt earth and heaven,  
On which, 'tis sung, the radiant angels tread  
In viewless glory, when a soul is given  
Into their keeping, while we mourn the dead.

The little daily joys and cares we knew,  
The scenes and faces of those yesterdays,  
Come to our minds all freshly in review,  
From out the misty, intervening haze  
Of time and distance, when perchance we turn  
Thought's mirror backward. Then may we  
behold,  
Fair as the clouds that in the sunset burn  
On summer evenings, the dear forms of old.

MY BOYHOOD HOME.

'Tis said that hearts resemble ocean shells,  
Cast by the moaning billows on the shore ;  
If one be taken, it forever tells  
The story of the white foam's ceaseless roar—  
As if some fairy of the dark-hued deep,  
Imprisoned there, pined ever to be free,  
To wing her flight back where her kindred keep  
Their mystic vigils deep down in the sea.

If this be true of others, then my own  
Forms no exception to the common lot.  
'Tis not the echo of a ceaseless moan  
For fair days squandered, ne'er to be forgot,  
But day or night, waking or wrapt in dreams,  
The home of childhood constantly appears  
Before my vision, and forever teems  
With light and shadow, sunny smiles and  
tears.

MY BOYHOOD HOME.

First in procession in fair memory's train,  
The dearest mother a fond child e'er knew,  
Or ever gently soothed a young heart's pain,  
Appears before my retrospective view.  
Who of that household, widely scattered now,  
Can think of her devoted love and care  
Nor wonder that the sorely bended bough  
Ne'er broke beneath the weight of fruit it bare?

The gentle murmur of the tropic sea,  
When winds are hushed to rest beneath the  
moon,  
Can never seem so sadly sweet to me  
As the far echoes of dear "Bonnie Doon,"  
As mother sang it, at the spinning wheel,  
So deftly by her busy fingers plied,  
While she anon would loving glances steal  
Towards the infant cradled by her side.



MY BOYHOOD HOME.

Time never can efface till end of days

The memory of her never-ending cares  
And fond solicitude, lest in the ways

Of untried life there *might* be hidden snares,  
To trap the unwary feet of those whom she,  
Like gentlest shepherdess beneath the sun,  
Had watched and guarded from calamity  
Each hour and moment since their lives begun.

And what a crowded home it was indeed

When all were gathered 'neath the parent roof,  
Before the elder children took the lead

And went forth battling in their own behoof !  
And what a busy hive, where every one

Was taught the value of each passing hour,  
Nor idle hands left hardest task undone

Which fell within the limits of their power !

MY BOYHOOD HOME.

Each season brought its constant round of toil,  
Commencing with the earliest days of spring,  
Ere the snows melted from the frozen soil  
Or trees began to bud or birds to sing.  
The leafless forest was invaded then,  
With axe and spile the sugar-maple sought,  
And to the camp within its woody glen  
The sap, when gathered, speedily was brought.

The fires beneath the cauldrons then were made,  
To burn all day, with fervent, even heat,  
And often were our homeward steps delayed  
Till nightfall found day's labors incomplete.  
Oh ! then what happiness to gather round  
The ruddy fire-glow, in the chill night air,  
While the grim darkness echoed back the sound  
Of merry songs, and laughter free from care.

MY BOYHOOD HOME.

What joy the fragrant syrup to bail out,  
All steaming hot, and then to bear it home,  
In buckets fixed with yoke and hoop so stout  
No danger of its spilling e'er could come.  
What pleasant welcome kindly faces wore  
For the belated ; and with what good cheer,  
Hearty though homely, from our ample store,  
The supper table waited for us there !

Plain, rustic people were we, true enough !  
Unlearned of fashion and all wealth can give,  
Treading no flowery pathway, but the rough  
And rocky road wherein the poor must strive.  
But is there one of us who would forget  
Those long-lost happy sugar-making days ?  
Or who indeed can look without regret  
Back to the joys and griefs of rural ways ?

MY BOYHOOD HOME.

Then April came, with sun and rain which took  
The snow away and brought the first spring  
flowers ;

The wheat and grass began to bear the look  
Of coming summer, while the hidden powers  
Within the hearts of all the leafless trees,  
From winter's bondage once again set free,  
Began to swell the buds ; then by degrees  
The whole world grew most wondrous fair to  
see,

All May ; until one morn bright June came forth,  
Arrayed in beauteous robes of green and gold !  
The south winds blew so softly on the north  
From the far Tropics, that the birds made bold  
To come in flocks to sing and build their nests  
Within the garden trees and 'neath the eaves ;  
The lilacs blossomed and the locust crests  
Were green as sea-waves with their wealth of  
leaves.

MY BOYHOOD HOME.

Queen of the Northern year, O dearest June !

How bright thy memories flow o'er my soul !  
How thy warm sunlight, like a Southern noon,  
Floods all my being with its bright control,  
Until I dream Arcadia must have lain

On thy fair borders ; and the Isle of Springs,  
In view from " visioning heights " along thy  
main,

Wafted across the wave on viewless wings

Odor of Lotus so divinely sweet,

That, breathing it, the spirit fain must yield  
To the intoxicating wish to eat

And court forgetfulness ! Yet sadly sealed  
Has been thy book for me this many a day ;

Though the slightest recollection of thy face—  
The briars growing in the woodland way,  
The cherries blushing at thy tender grace,

MY BOYHOOD HOME.

The chestnuts planted by the garden wall  
By hand now planting fairer fields than these,  
The apple blossoms whose sweet eyes recall  
The humble cottage mid the forest trees,  
Upon the spot where now they yield their fruit,  
Beside the graves of those who've gone to  
sleep  
With the cold marble pointing white and mute  
Above their slumbers to the upper deep—  
These, and a thousand tenderest replies  
Come to my questioning heart across the waste  
Of time and distance, June ! Appealing eyes  
Steal on my thoughts ; and if I could but haste  
To swifter measure, this, my poor lame verse,  
Across the years I'd beckon them to come,  
And for one happy hour those scenes rehearse  
Which hold my heart of hearts ; and then be  
dumb.

MY BOYHOOD HOME.

II.

A swallow does not make the summer ; so  
June with her glory does not make the year.  
She may be queen, and *is*; but cannot go  
Beyond her all too briefly glorious sphere.  
Her warmth and beauty end not with her sway,  
But, when her sceptre passes to her kin,  
Intensified in passion day by day,  
They stimulate all nature, and begin,  
Ere July well has caught the reins of power,  
To bend the grasses by the meadow brook  
Beneath the lowering of the thunder shower,  
And burn the tassels of the corn to look  
Chestnut. And as the bright days pass,  
The sheep, all sheared, are panting 'neath the  
shade,  
And the tired oxen, stretched upon the grass,  
Seem wondering why such heat was ever made.

MY BOYHOOD HOME.

'Twas wonderful to watch, as the swift days  
Fell into shining rows of summer weeks,  
While August suns burned up the dusty ways  
And dried the springs which fed the crystal  
creeks,  
By what strange alchemy the waving wheat  
Was turned to golden billows in the breeze !  
The reapers looking like a tiny fleet  
Rocking its sunny way through yellow seas !  
The harvest apples and the berries red,  
How precious sweet they seemed in those old  
days !  
And the cool root-beer dearest mother made  
For the tired harvesters ! Oh ! should delays  
Of purgatorial nature keep us back  
From quick reception in the world on high,  
Whene'er our path leads up the misty track  
Towards the home we hope for by and by—



MY BOYHOOD HOME.

Could we but be supplied in such dire plight,  
With plenteous draughts from such another  
store,

I doubt the torments that could cause us quite  
To leave, without regret, that doubtful shore !  
You smile ? You may ; and so indeed would I,  
If once again beneath the harvest tree,  
The yellow sunlight burning up the sky,  
One cooling goblet were vouchsafed to me !

It is perhaps the dearest gift to own  
Of any other, that, when youth has fled,  
All the familiar scenes and faces gone  
Among the distant or laid with the dead,  
One may forget the little ills which flecked  
Life's happy current, nor remember aught  
To mar the beauty of the retrospect,  
Though tenderest tears flow quickly when a  
thought

MY BOYHOOD HOME.

Or memory comes of some lost love or hope,  
    Long dead and buried with the withered  
        leaves  
Of life's fair roses ; never to look up  
    Above its grave ! Alas ! this truly grieves !  
And yet, and yet, it is a grief *so* dear,  
    So sacred and so tender, that the heart,  
Sorrowing, rejoices ; and its fear  
    Through its great love is bidden to depart.

Thus it has come to pass, in this at least,  
    That I forget the rough and painful toil,  
Early and late, the care and work that ceased  
    Only when Sunday came, our thoughts to call  
For a brief space away from earthly things.  
    Or, if not quite forgot, so little weighed  
That their remembrance never o'er me brings  
    A sad reflection or a passing shade

MY BOYHOOD HOME.

Of sorrow or regret, that in their place  
Luxurious ease had not held quiet sway.  
With a glad heart I look them in the face  
And say—"Oh! yes; but that was far away!"  
So very far that if I did not know  
Realities, or had not ever known,  
I might imagine it a fairy plow  
I held that day, when, catching on a stone,

It threw me underneath the horses' feet  
In deadly peril! Or I might go back  
Among the hay, and say the lad I greet,  
So tired and sick with mowing as to lack  
The power to raise his head to make reply,  
Being so much alike, perhaps was me.  
What then? The blue and tranquil summer sky  
That day gave promise of Eternity!

MY BOYHOOD HOME.

And the next evening ! Can I, can I pass  
    Along the line of memory's shining nets,  
Sometimes let down into those deeps, alas !  
    So growing deeper with each sun that sets,  
Nor stop one little moment in *that* eve,  
    Darkened by storm and wild with thunder-  
        clouds ?  
Did the red flashes of the lightning leave  
    No memory of it, which my heart enshrouds ?  
The cows were hastened homeward from the  
    wood  
    Before its coming ; and the milking-pails  
Were being filled as fast as e'er we could  
    Press the full udders. But no haste avails !  
The wind tossed up the locust branches high  
    For one brief moment ; then the furious rain  
Came swooping downwards from the angry sky,  
    So sudden that no shelter could we gain.

MY BOYHOOD HOME.

To "stand and take it" was not very much,  
    Seeing the cows were there for company.  
(Better it may be to have been in such  
    Than certain other in this world we see.)  
A sudden wish to brave it was my own,  
    A quick desire to stand there and behold  
The lightning rend the clouds, and hear them  
    groan  
    And roar and peal their thunders on the world !  
With head uncovered and with face upturned—  
    The storm ablaze and raging for an hour,  
As though Inferno in the heavens burned  
    And Neptune battled to subdue its power—  
The boy, untroubled by a sense of fear,  
    His soul imbued with reverent love and awe,  
Remained, lone witness, until night drew near  
    To break the spell and bid the clouds with-  
    draw.

MY BOYHOOD HOME.

Description fails the glory to portray,  
Just as the fury of the tempest ceased.  
The sinking splendors of the king of day,  
Burned in the evening heavens from west to  
east ;  
And when the gorgeous after-sunset glow  
Inflamed the rising mists with hues divine,  
When rose and gold and purple blent to show  
The power of God—the littleness of mine—

My all untutored mind and heart caught up,  
In their scant treasury of precious things,  
At least a faint portrayal. And my hope,  
O'erflying, may be, with her slender wings  
The bounds of prudence, trustfully relies,  
When morning dawns for us and life above  
Begins by ending here, the sinless skies  
Will beam upon us with such light of love !

MY BOYHOOD HOME.

III.

The fairest sight of all the world to see  
Is the ripe fruit developed from its germ,  
Rich with the bloom of full maturity ;  
As when love's early bliss has had its term,  
And youthful longings have been lulled to sleep,  
Within the rounded beauty with which time  
Invests the beautiful. Power more deep  
And more resistless than of sweetest prime

Dwells in perfected passion ; power to sip  
Life's nectar from the overflowing brim,  
Or to withhold anon the thirsting lip,  
Lest from excess the light of love grow dim.  
Type and dear emblem of those golden days,  
The Northern Autumn, wearing kingly crown  
Of plenty, blent with gracious beauty, lays  
On the fair earth its regal treasures down.

MY BOYHOOD HOME.

My eyes have seen an island of the sea,  
Where wild Atlantic meets the Carib wave,  
Which in its beauty seems fit simile

For nature's triumph when at last she gave  
September and October to the year.

It rises from its emerald sea-girt shore,  
With a wide, lovely sweep into the clear  
Eternal skies, where fancy loves to soar,

As though a sentient soul within had said,  
"I now will draw my lines so wondrous fair,  
From my warm feet e'en to my mountain head,  
Towering so grandly through the dreamy air,  
Men shall be fain to call me beautiful ;  
And as they sail away shall turn to gaze  
Upon my form, which shall their souls enthrall  
With its remembrance to their latest days."



MY BOYHOOD HOME.

Who that has parted from a Northern home,  
Its hills and vales, its streams and forest trees,  
The seas of fortune far away to roam,  
Does not recall, while sailing on the breeze  
That bears him further still forevermore  
From all those scenes dear to his inmost soul,  
September, sweeping up from Summer's shore  
To proud October, monarch of them all !

IV.

If God the power had given unto me,  
To clothe with language what my heart would  
sing,  
I do not think it would my longing be  
Sublime conceptions from great heights to  
bring,  
But to portray with all the love I feel  
Dear homely pictures of the things I've seen,  
Or dreamed of, so that I might break the seal  
Of those sweet founts that keep the memory  
green.

MY BOYHOOD HOME.

Age follows youth, and fatefully grim death,  
Like a dire vampire, drinks the blood of life ;  
And winds will seaward blow, with wafting  
breath,

Tho' on the shore hands wave and hearts are rife  
With vision-blinding sorrow ; darkness comes  
All as securely as the dawn of day ;  
But while this life endures, in earthly homes  
Shall brightly beam affection's gentle ray.

Yea, beam and beam ; and so illumine the track—  
Downward or upward, whichsoe'er it be—  
From youth to age, that, looking fondly back,  
As eyes from mountain heights search all the  
sea,  
Or from the sea peer tow'rd the purple glooms,  
The simplest objects shall forever glow  
Like crimson cloudlets or like beauty's blooms,  
As warm as summer and as pure as snow.

MY BOYHOOD HOME.

'Tis love, perhaps, and distance purify,  
And time. At least they strip the dross away  
From those, our idols, of the days gone by,  
And to the grave consign whate'er was clay.  
So, it is scarcely dear old Pacer now,  
With his white face and feet and kindly eyes,  
Patient and good in carriage or at plow,  
That half rejoices me and half brings sighs ;

Nor Bose, the watchful guardian of the night,  
All gray with age, and faithful as the sun  
In whose warm rays and life-restoring light  
He basked and dreamed of canine glory won  
In youth ; nor yet my little turkey chicks,  
My first and last, whose loss I sorely grieved,  
Nine beauties, killed by one of those sad tricks  
Men should not tell to boys to be believed ;

MY BOYHOOD HOME.

Nor even yet my Charley-colt so fine,  
Dun-colored, zebra-legged, with stripe of  
brown  
From mane to tail—how proud to call him mine !  
Not all of these nor all I could write down,  
Objects themselves, do hold my heart in thrall,  
But their remembrance is so dearly prized,  
That until faded are life's treasures all,  
They shall remain for aye idealized.

A thronging throng ! Like spirits of the air,  
They come and hover round me in the night,  
Waking or sleeping, and corroding care  
Is banished from my "Gardens of Delight,"  
Wherein I sit, to reckon o'er and o'er  
That rosary of scenes and seasons dear,  
Beginning with the violet-sweet shore  
Of Spring, and only ending with the year.

MY BOYHOOD HOME.

Far more enchanting than all else before,  
Awaking longings after something higher,  
More perfect and diviner, kept in store  
In climes immortal, to which souls aspire,  
Appear those hazy Indian-summer days,  
When the Autumnal frosts had tinged the  
leaves  
With glorious hues, setting the world ablaze,  
And Ceres bound her last and fairest sheaves.

V.

My full heart lingers and would gladly dwell  
Loving and long mid those endearing scenes,  
Would fain to kindred hearts the story tell,  
How kindly nature, with o'erflowing means,  
Filled all the land with plenty, and arrayed  
The earth in richest robes of loveliness.  
Alas ! by yea nor nay can be delayed  
The chariot wheels of Time. Onward they  
press,

MY BOYHOOD HOME.

Forever, crushing out the wine and blood  
Of life alike. Ne'er sweetest songs of joy,  
Nor saddest sighs of sorrow, yet withstood  
One briefest moment ; nor can man employ,  
Nor art, nor power, so Godlike as to stay,  
By so much as a breath, their ceaseless roll ;  
But onward, ever onward, day by day,  
They near the borderland 'tween sense and  
soul,

Twixt seen and unseen, where dwell bandit  
loves,  
And hopes and brave imaginings which go  
Raiding beyond the line, e'en to those groves  
Of amaranthine verdure, where we know  
The loved and lost abide ; returning oft,  
Sprinkled with dews from the celestial skies  
And odor-laden with the fragrance soft  
Of shores whereon the Mounts of Bliss arise.

MY BOYHOOD HOME.

Wherefore, my relics of that former day,  
How dear soever they may be to me,  
Must be laid by, although to them I may  
Cling as the drowning unto wrecks at sea.  
And when November merges her sad sigh,  
Over the fallen leaf, in Winter's moan,  
And when her tears, descending from the sky,  
Are chilled and frozen, cold as hearts of stone,

Then must I lingeringly my gaze withdraw,  
And wave across the gulfs a fond adieu !  
Nor am I very sad ; for by that law  
Of love, which ever keeps the true love true,  
Through correspondence shall my own heart be  
With quiet joy and happiness elate,  
Through and o'er all that Fate may bring to me,  
Until I reach the spirit's high estate.

MY BOYHOOD HOME.

Good-bye ! Across the raging desert sea,  
From this fair, tropic, ever-blooming land,  
Whereto kind Fortune's breezes wafted me,  
I send such greeting as I could command.  
Oh ! could the language I but here translate,  
In which surrounding nature finds a voice !  
Oh ! if the rushing of bright wings would wait  
To teach the art to me, it would rejoice

My inmost being ! Then, dear Home of youth,  
And all the Loves that I did know therein,  
Friends still on earth, and even ye the truth  
Who know of life beyond this vale of sin,  
The soul of Summer, pulsing through my own,  
Should beat such bars of tuneful melody  
As ye might reckon sweet, and undertone  
All sweetly back in echo unto me.



MY BOYHOOD HOME.

Oh ! then these fairy-haunted woods and streams,  
These gorgeous birds and ever-blooming  
flowers,

This never-ending June, this land of dreams,  
Where in delicious languor die the hours,  
Should yield the secrets of their hearts to mine,  
Enrapt and climbing purple heights of bliss,  
Unknown on earth, save when the gods combine,  
And gleam the glories of their worlds on this.

The Palms should whisper what sweet messages  
They're waving upward, towards the bending  
sky, [breeze.

Stirred by the light, warm breathings of the

The Cactuses should tell the secret why  
Their sweetest sister\* bloometh in the night,  
Unfolding her white heart with trembling haste.

And, Holy Orchid,† ye should glad my sight,  
Where ye do hide, within the wildering waste,

\* Night-blooming Cereus.

† Espiritu-Santo or Holy Ghost flower.

MY BOYHOOD HOME.

With vision of thy transformation strange,  
From heart of flower to wondrous form of dove !  
All things soever, in the mystic range  
Of tropic nature, from the skies above  
Unto the glistening archipelagoes  
Of emerald islands, sunning in the wave,  
Would I waft northward, soft as wind that blows  
Billows of violets around a grave.

And you, to pleasure whom these lines I've  
penned,  
To whom I speed them o'er the deep so far,  
My loving wife, my counsellor, my friend,  
My inspiration and my light, my star !  
If, when you read them o'er, your heart replies  
In echo, and a dear responsive chord  
Of loving thought beams from your loving eyes,  
When meeting mine, I shall have my reward.

*Written at Colon, Isthmus of Panama.*

AN ORATION:

DELIVERED AT THE UNITED STATES CONSULATE,  
ASPINWALL, JULY 4<sup>TH</sup>, 1866.



## *ORATION.*

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THE Century Plant is said to awaken with a throb of beauty and yield up its long hidden heart in blossom only once in a hundred years. During the interval, it dreams in rapt silence and obscurity of the coming anniversary, when it may unfold its floral beauties to the dear light of heaven and the wondering gaze of man. More fortunate than this natural wonder, the divine implantation of love of freedom, so universally and deeply rooted in man's nature, always growing to greater beauty and perfection, has, with us at least, its yearly anniversary, and stirs the great American heart with one universal thrill and joyous outburst on each recurrence of this, "The Day we celebrate."

## ORATION.

It is a happy thought for us, that we are not alone in our glad and devoted observance of the day. Not only on the dear home shores, but in every clime, our widely scattered countrymen, fired with the same spirit of loyalty and love that is animating us, are this hour engaged in the same happy devotion to the memory of the birth and traditions of our common country.

We are accustomed to call this a glorious day, and ours a glorious land. We are apt to boast our emblematic eagle, mid its halo of stars, and our waving red, white, and blue, presided over by the protecting genius of our patron goddess, the proudest insignia of any nation. Others sometimes call us enthusiastic, romantic, bombastic, if you will, and smile with no gentle cynicism at our claims to greatness. Elder nations, now in the sere and yellow of their days, are slow to admit the vigorous, sturdy manhood of our early prime. But where, oh ! where, on God's green earth shall the gaze of the world be turned for the equal of our example? Comparisons

## ORATION.

are always odious, it is said, therefore not graceful on an occasion of festivity :

“ Let them buried lie.”

Let other nations and peoples boast their fill, while we will be content with ourselves ; and reverently let us ask,

“ In the light of God’s great glory,  
Who are we ? What are we ? ”

Have we aught of which to be proud ? Does the history of our past encourage us ? Let us consult it.

“ The breaking waves dashed high  
On a stern and rockbound coast,”

one wintry day scarce two hundred and fifty years ago. America was then a wild from sea to mountain range, and thence to the farthest unknown ocean. The Indian and wild beast held the wilderness undisputed. A wide continent still slumbered in the arms of its natal savageism. Nature, the sovereign, held sway in her sumptuous, queenly grandeur o’er the wild expanse, the subjects of her laws numbering only savage men and beasts, wild mountain ranges, lakes of magnificent

#### ORATION.

beauty, and deep, endless forests, warmed by the genial sunlight into majestic life, watered by a thousand rushing rivers and swayed by the wild winds of heaven.

There was no Hudson, or Ohio, or James, or Connecticut, or Tennessee, or Columbia, or Missouri, or mighty Mississippi, then; no Mount Washington, or Ascutney, or Peaks of Otter, or bold Point Lookout, or Alleghany, or grand Rocky Mountain chains; no Superior, or Ontario, or lovely George, or Great Salt Desert lakes; no multitude of cities, busy centres all of wealth and commerce—but instead, a nameless, trackless, almost boundless wild, awaiting in blindness and darkness the coming Messiah of civilization.

Good old Rip Van Winkle, upon awaking from his slumber of many years, sought for the scenes familiar to his closing vision. A new world surrounded him, and the sleeper searched in vain for traces of the past. They were gone! and he was left wondering and lamenting—a fossil of a former



## ORATION.

creation. Imagine for an instant that we outsleep the sleepy Dutchman, and going back to the time when that brave hearted

“Band of exiles moored their bark  
On the wild New England shore,”

we consign to oblivious dreams the two and a half intervening centuries, and open our eyes on this auspicious day.

What scene of enchantment is this ! would be our exclamation. What more than Arabian Nights entertainment blinds and dazzles our returning sight ? By what magic or art of necromancy are we deluded ? What grand vision of a scarce dreamed of, yet already realized, futurity bursts with millennial splendor upon our view ? Are we still in the fairy fable-land of dreams ? Impossible ! Where, then, are the pitiless wilderness and more pitiless savage ? Where the great unknown of the mighty continent, stretching out beyond the frowning portals of the hither shore—beyond even imagination’s most daring flight ? Where the wild

## ORATION.

New World of two hundred and fifty years ago?  
Gone! Every trace faded and lost, and gone.  
The frowning barriers of savageism have been  
swept away by the resistless march of a new, and  
brave, and free civilization. *American civilization!*  
*Ours!* Its onward course has been like that of the  
sweeping, all-compelling storm-wind, save that it  
has scattered naught but blessings. The far roar  
of its coming has been like that of desolating  
waters, save that it has made the generous earth  
to "smile and blossom as the rose." Like the  
deep echo of

"A great world in prayer,  
Like God's own thunders in the air,"

furious, and unyielding, and triumphant as a  
conquering host, pressing down with sound of  
trumpets and waving of banners upon the van-  
quished, save that the dear ties, Hope, Justice  
and Liberty, have led the vanguard, dispensing  
joy, equality, and the greatest of God's blessings.  
Since its rise it has been the only true Star of

## ORATION.

Empire. The Old World has been comparatively idle. Those of her people who have lingered there have continued to feel the dread oppression of her systems, and have been standing still rather than advancing in the march of human progress, while those who have forsaken her and fled for refuge to our shores, catching the swift impulse of a true and generous liberty, have beheld the dawn of a fuller, fresher, happier life.

Words are idle. No language of mine can awaken the true American—who has studied his country's history, who is familiar with her trials and triumphs, who comprehends her greatness and possible destiny—to greater love and devotion. Her course has been upward like a star, climbing the azure deeps towards highest heaven. Mists have gathered, and storm clouds black with wrath have spent their angry fury, but behold her ever emerging into upper, purer air ! Like the Star, her place is firmly fixed in Time's wide firmament, and her course is heavenward !

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Our recent gigantic struggle with rebellion and its happy termination have taught not only ourselves, but the world, a lesson of the permanency of free institutions. Believers of high and low degree in the disruption of our free Empire, canters of the "dismembered Republic," and the "late Union," whether in high public place or in private life, have been rebuked and silenced by the mighty logic of events. The flaming thunders of loyal cannon and the deadly gleam of Freedom's bayonets, pressing forward, though deluging the land with brave hearts' blood and darkening many a home with the wide o'ershadowing wings of Death, have borne our proud flag in triumph everywhere, restoring peace and union, blotting out forever our *only stain*, breaking down all barriers of caste, binding us together as one people, with one common hope, one aim, one destiny, and making our land forever, with God's greatest blessing, the true "Land of the free," the true "Home of the brave."

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May we not then say that this, the natal day of the Great Republic, is a glorious occasion? May we not without vanity call *that* people truly great which has achieved such triumphs?

With an area of 3,000,000 square miles, nearly equal to the whole of Europe; a population of 35,000,000, scattered over thirty-four States; a sea-coast frontier of more than 5,000 miles, indented with magnificent bays and harbors, sufficient for the shipping of the world; with lakes and rivers of great beauty and extent, all bearing upon their bosoms the teeming argosies of commerce; with mountain ranges marvelously grand in scenery and rich in mineral wealth; with hills and valleys and wide-spreading prairies yielding their agricultural bounties, towns and cities of rare beauty, crowded centres of enterprise, refinement and learning; with a people devoted to the pursuits of industry and peace, and a government founded and happily perpetuated upon the eternal principles of human equality, its chief corner stone the sublime assertion

## ORATION.

of life, Liberty, and the pursuit of happiness to all its subjects ; its past unrivalled, its present power resistless, and its future glorious ; who shall say to the American of to-day he may not be loyally proud or yield to a generous enthusiasm when his country is his theme ?

Some artist of divine endowment shall yet be born, whose soul shall conceive and whose ready hand shall transfix upon the awaiting canvas a glorious allegory of our history. In the foreground there shall be bitter winter darkness, on a wild, unknown shore, with crouching savages and the dim outlines of wild beasts shadowed darkly forth among the rocks and beneath the frowning forests.

The conception shall be wild and forbidding, and the scene shall challenge the advance of the best bravery. Then he shall paint the Dawn, with its mists rising above and beyond, revealing a glimpse of a new, untried creation, with the Star of Empire for its morning star and wide reaches of coming light upon the horizon. Then, swift advancing

## ORATION.

Morning, with its grand revelation of a continent still in the arms of nature, with mountains, rivers and lakes scattered in wild beauty, smiling in the genial light, and awaiting, as a bride, the coming genius of civilized intelligence. Then Day, with all its glories and infinite possibilities, stretching away and away, its widest boundaries filled with golden evidences of art, learning, enterprise and refinement; Prosperity and Joy shedding their gentle influence upon the scene, Hope smiling welcome, Plenty ever ready to shower her blessings, Power, Triumph, and Fame attendant, while *Liberty*, radiant and pointing heavenward, shall be enthroned upon the central eminence, her shield and own loved eagle beside her, surrounded by her circling stars and haloed by the most radiant tricolor of heaven's transcendent bow.

Love of country is among the first natural instincts. As life advances it becomes the first love of every true heart. The mind fondly reverts to the scenes of home and to the dear ties of the past

## ORATION.

in every stage of life, in every clime, until death claims its victim. The poor slave, rudely torn from his home and transported across seas, pines for the waving palm, the soft airs of his native summer, and even in the triumph of his dreams, lives again in the loved light of lost days. Men everywhere set up in their hearts an altar sacred to the spot of their birth, endowing it with whatever affectionate remembrance is in their natures. Living, they turn ever homeward, and dying,

“Oft they pray,

The only wish for which their hearts have room,”  
to be permitted to repose in familiar earth. But whenever or wherever the fiat shall come that life is ended, whether amid friends and scenes familiar, or on far, lone foreign shores, I know that I but echo the heartfelt aspiration of *all* my countrymen when I pray—

Grant me, Great Father, when this earthly sight  
Is blinding to the things I knew,  
When life is yielding, and the blessed light  
Of Heaven's in view,



ORATION.

MY COUNTRY shall stand foremost in the band  
Of freedom's gallant true and tried,  
And that my dying eyes behold our land,  
By Thy power, glorified !

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